

Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

§ 955.43

EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS

§ 955.40 Expenses.

The committee is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary may find are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the committee for its maintenance and functioning, and to enable it to exercise its powers and perform its duties in accordance with the provisions of this part. The funds to cover such expenses shall be acquired in the manner prescribed in §§ 955.42 and 955.45.

§ 955.41 Budget.

At least 60 days prior to each fiscal period, or such other date as may be specified by the Secretary, and as may be necessary thereafter, the committee shall prepare an estimated budget of income and expenditures necessary for the administration of this part. The committee may recommend a rate of assessment calculated to provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures. The committee shall present such budget to the Secretary with an accompanying report showing the basis for its calculations.

§ 955.42 Assessments.

(a) The funds to cover the committee's expenses shall be acquired by the levying of assessments upon handlers as provided in this subpart. Each person who first handles Vidalia onions shall pay assessments to the committee upon demand, which assessments shall be in payment of such handler's pro rata share of the committee's expenses.

(b) Assessments shall be levied upon handlers at rates established by the Secretary. Such rates may be established upon the basis of the committee's recommendations or other available information.

(c) At any time during, or subsequent to, a given fiscal period the committee may recommend the approval of an amended budget and an increase in the rate of assessment. Upon the basis of such recommendations, or other available information, the Secretary may approve an amended budget and increase the assessment rate. Such increase shall be applicable to all Vidalia

onions which were handled during such fiscal period.

(d) The payment of assessments for the maintenance and functioning of the committee may be required under this part throughout the period it is in effect irrespective of whether particular provisions of this part are suspended or become inoperative.

(e) To provide funds for the administration of the provisions of this part during the initial fiscal period or the first part of a fiscal period when neither sufficient operating reserve funds nor sufficient revenue from assessments on the current seasons's shipments are available, the committee may accept payment of assessments in advance or may borrow money for such purposes.

(f) The committee may impose a late payment charge or an interest charge or both, on any handler who fails to pay any assessment in a timely manner. Such time and the rates shall be recommended by the committee and approved by the Secretary.

§ 955.43 Accounting.

(a) All funds received by the committee pursuant to the provisions of this part shall be used solely for the purposes specified in this part.

(b) The Secretary may at any time require the committee, its members and alternates, employees, agents and all other persons to account for all receipts and disbursements, funds, property, or records for which they are responsible. Whenever any person ceases to be a member or alternate of the committee, such person shall account for all receipts and disbursements and deliver all property and funds in such member's possession to the committee, pertaining to the committee's activities for which such person was responsible, and shall execute such assignments and other instruments as may be necessary or appropriate to vest in the committee full title to all of the property, funds, and claims vested in such person.

(c) The committee may make recommendations to the Secretary for one or more of the members thereof, or any other person, to act as a trustee for holding records, funds, or any other committee property during periods of